

LEXICAL PECULIARITIES OF CUBAN VARIANT OF SPANISH LANGUAGE UNDER THE CONDITIONS OF DIALECTOLOGICAL ISOLATION

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ABSTRACT

The article deals with lexical peculiarities of Cuban variant of Spanish language, that is an example of dialectologically dissected variant used in an isolated insular territory with a special political situation. Historical evolution of Spanish language Cuban variant lexis to a large extent repeats evolution of other national variants of Spanish language, including such aspects as Arabisms, Africanisms, Indianisms. In the meantime events of the 20th century brought completely unique phenomena into the lexical system of Spanish language in Cuba, having thrust into the spotlight extratextual factors of its evolution. The article is a research that precedes the creation of the cultural linguistics vocabulary of lexis of Caribbean basin Spanish-speaking countries. As research methods the authors used the method of continuous vocabulary sampling and descriptive method. The main purpose of the research was to reveal extratextual factors which conduced to evolution of vocabulary of Spanish language Cuban variant, and that in its turn led to classification of vocabulary of that variant of Spanish language depending on revealed extratextual factors in the situation of dialectological isolation of Spanish language Cuban variant. The main factor of replenishment and changing of Spanish language Cuban variant vocabulary was the choice of a geopolitical partner at a particular period of Cuba historical development, and also "from-the-top" inculcation of the special politically marked lexis.

Key words: lexicology, dialectology, Cuban variant of Spanish language

1. INTRODUCTION

Cuban national variant of Spanish language belongs to the Antilles dialectic continuum, which also includes Dominican and Puerto-Rican variants. Despite the previous century's great interest in studying of Spanish language Cuban variant, there are still a lot of questions about the process of its vocabulary formation, and also about peculiarities of development of Cuban differentiation in Caribbean basin.

Researches of evolution of Cuban national variant, its phonetic, morphosyntactic and lexical peculiarities were started as far back as late 18th – early 19th century. The very first works were dedicated to systematization of so-called *cubanisms*: "MemoriaquepromuevelaedicioneundiccionarioprovincialdelalsladeCuba"(Notes for publication of local dictionary of Cuba island) by José María Peñalver, published in 1795, "Diccionariocubano, etimológico, crítico, razonadoycomprensivo" (Cuban aetiologic dictionary with review and valid arguments) by José Miguel Macías (1885), "LalingüísticadeCuba" (Cuba Linguistics) by Francisco M. Mota (1868-1968), "Diccionariastdecubanismo" (Dictionary of cubanisms) published in 1961 by Alfredo Padrona, "Elvocabulariocubano" (Cuban dictionary) (1921) by Constantino Suárez [1] etc.

The most up to date works concerning Spanish language Cuban variant date from the second half of 20th century. For obvious reasons many works of that time were based on theoretical insights of Soviet scientists. Phonetical and syntactical peculiarities of Spanish language Cuban national variant became a stumbling block to researches of Rafael Núñez, Tracy D. Terrel, Robert M. Hammond. Most of works (Carlos Paz Perez, Lirca Vallés Calaña) belong to general theoretical descriptions of Spanish language Cuban variant peculiarities.

Among Russian works we can highlight thesis research by Aluart de la Cruz Mae Florentina "Linguocultural specificity of presentive lexis of Spanish language Cuban variant against the background of Castilian variant", which represented and described linguocultural specificity of lexical units in Castilian and Cuban variants of Spanish language. However, this work touches on only one range of aspects of lexis. For example, Aluart de la Cruz notes that in Cuba some words can have additional meanings: *casa*– 'house' and 'bring roosters together for fight'; *cama* – 'bed' and 'truck body' etc. [2]

Thus, on the basis of above mentioned, we can affirm that it is topical to study peculiarities of formation of Spanish language Cuban variant vocabulary in the context of dialectological isolation.

Research Methods

Main methods of studying of Spanish language Cuban variant vocabulary were method of continuous sampling from Spanish language dictionaries containing lexical units typical for Spanish language Cuban variant, and method of descriptive introspective analysis allowing to fit language facts into Spanish language Cuban variant lexicographical view. Language facts analysis was also carried out taking into account the effect of extratextual factors being considerably important for this research.

2. RESULTS

As the research material we have analyzed 1390 lexical units having marks that are characteristic and relevant for the research.

Speculation

Revelation of above mentioned lexical units and subsequent analysis of them allowed to draw following conclusions:

Indian substrate

Formation of vocabulary of the concerned national variant was influenced by historical development of the island, its social and geographical situation. Originally Cuba was inhabited by tribes of Indians of Arawakan group, tribes of Ciboney and Guanahatabey, and also Indians from Haiti. Therefore, colonizers' Spanish language in XVI century came into contact with such Indian languages as Arawakan, Nahuatl, Kechua and Guarani. A lot of scientists also write about occurring of so-called *aruaquismos*, which denoted everyday objects, flora and fauna.

However, later the island's aboriginal population shared the same fate as the Indians in other Caribbean basin countries: part of them was exterminated, and other part died because of new diseases. In this regard many researchers outline the impossibility to study Indians languages effect on Spanish language Cuban variant in phonetical aspect. Cuban Spanish did not incur the grammar effect of the island's aboriginal population languages. Nevertheless, we cannot say the same about the language's vocabulary. Study of Indianisms in Cuban Spanish triggered works of Ramos Duarte (1892) "Orígenes del lenguaje cubano" (Origin of Cuban language) and "Diccionario yucayo" (Dictionary of Yucayo), and also "El lenguaje de los indios de Cuba" (Language of Cuba Indians) by Julian Vivanco (1946).

Humberto López Morales carried out the research aimed at checking if Indianisms presented in the dictionary by Pichardo (1953) and in works by Buesa Oliver (1965) were used. The scientist arrived at a conclusion that the presented set of Indianisms is far from being fully used in modern language. Thus, Morales highlights randomness and inaccuracy as main characteristics of many dictionaries of Indianisms [3]. The scientist also underlines necessity of starting out from words normative usage and also paying special attention to dialectal differences within the boundaries of Cuba. For instance, Morales notes that intonation in Cuba Eastern regions differs from intonation in the island's other part. The scientist explains such difference with the influence of Taíno language: "... parece que este hecho tenga una relación con el taíno, ya que la influencia indígena subsistió con mayor fuerza en las zonas orientales" (...it seems that this fact is somehow related to Taíno, because the aboriginal population influence was especially significant in Eastern regions) [4].

Among lexical units of Indian origin we can note the following ones: *cocuyo* – a flying insect glowing with green light at night, which is also called a firefly; *ja* – to bear; *ba* – inside (the word Cuba itself meant "green, inside" and was used to denote a garden or a vegetable garden); *bibijagua* – an ant etc..

African adstrat

Aboriginal depopulation in XVI century caused demand for unpaid labour power. As a result, onto the island slaves from Central Africa were imported. Absence of reliable sources of information on African element in Cuba gives no chance to make some statements with certainty. It is known that over one million slaves from different tribes were imported, in particular Congo, Ewe, Yoruba, Ashanti etc. Fernando Ortiz is an author of "New 'catauro' of Cubanisms" published in 1923; it contains data on Africanisms in Spanish language Cuban variant [5]. N. Del Castillo notes that Africanisms are quite often used in modern language, because most of them are toponyms, anthroponyms and demonyms [6]. For example, *murruñoso* - little, *chachá* – African musical instrument, *lipidioso* – greedy, *pelona* – death, *gatazo* – deceit, *fuguilla* – impatience etc.

Dialectological distinctiveness of Spanish language Cuban variant.

We should note a special dialectological situation with Spanish language Cuban variant. On the one hand, Spanish language in Cuba is affected by geographical position of the island, its detachment from other variants of Spanish language in South America and exposure to influence of other languages (for example, English) which are geographically near to Cuba. On the other hand, Spanish language Cuban variant distinguishes itself with certain uniformness, which is connected with compulsory expansion of Spanish language standard variant after Cuban revolution of 1959. This is especially expressed specifically at the language lexical level. Cuba can be divided into 5 dialectal zones:

Zone I. Pinar del Río, La Habana, Matanzas, Cienfuegos, municipality Trinidad

Zone II. Villa Clara, Santi Espíritus, Ciego de Ávila

Zone III. Camaguey, Las Tunas, Holguín, Northern and Western part of province Granma

Zone IV. South-Eastern part of province Granma, province Santiago de Cuba, Guantánamo

Zone V. Municipios Baracoa, Maisí, Imías, Moa, Sagua de Tánamo

Among these zones Zone 1 (including the country's capital Havana) is the pronest to lexical innovations, and two last ones are the most conservative.

Absence of significant dialectological differences allows to talk of certain dialectological isolationism of Spanish language Cuban variant which is used in the territory without visual boundaries with zones of functioning of other Spanish language variants or other languages. Such isolationism promotes language changes orientation towards extratextual factors, among which choice of geopolitical partner in a historical period becomes a critical one for Cuba. Presence and significance of this partner played an important role in uptake and accepting of borrowings by Spanish Cuban language system.

Galicisms and anglicisms in Spanish language Cuban variant.

The special island location of Cuba destined its certain dialectological isolation in comparison with other variants of Spanish. Cuba turned out to be detached from both peninsular variant of Spanish and other territories of South America where Spanish was used.

A major contribution to formation of vocabulary of Spanish language Cuban national variant was made by the French who emigrated from Haiti and Louisiana in great numbers in late XVIII century, and also the Germans, the Italians and the British. Up to now in the west of the island many surnames have French origin. This influence resulted in a significant amount of French borrowings in Spanish language Cuban variant, and also some phonetic phenomena which are peculiar to it (in particular, special pronunciation of *ch*). Written sources of the Francophone era in Cuba (late 19th – early 20th century) abounds with galicisms examples, mostly unadapted (*malcontent*, *cuaseries*, *touriste*). But as French influence grew weaker, amount of French words in Spanish language Cuban variant decreased. Nowadays the island variant contains galicisms which are common to other Spanish language variants too (*attaché*, *constelado*, *matiné*), usage of unadapted galicisms is not noted in corpuses.

Following independence, Cuba shunned from its metropolis, Spain, both in political economic and linguistics spheres. Relationships with the United States of America became the most influential factor in this period, and this strengthened language contacts with descendants from this country. In Spanish language Cuban national variant a large amount of anglicisms was registered due to presence of American military forces on the island after Spanish-American War (1898) and subsequent external policy situation. USA were the main economic partner of Cuba, and during this period Spanish language Cuban variant vocabulary was filled with lots of Americanisms imported by both USA citizens and the Cubans who obtained education in the USA. Among Americanisms blended into the Cubans lexicon we can observe first of all words reflecting culture and American life style: *beisbol*, *basquetbol*, *ring*, *short*, and other words, on the contrary, do not reflect neither realities nor lacunae, but are used in everyday life: *foráneo*, *despotricar*. As a rule, English borrowings in any language become assimilated to different degrees, this is demonstrated by A. Ashrapov and S. Alendeyev in their article which is dedicated to borrowings from English and German [7], and this is also characteristic of Spanish language Cuban variant («ahoratenemo<alargamiento>slacompetenciade beisbol de // delauniversidad / puedesparticipar» [8]), English loan words became widely used: *estacióndepolicía* (En. police station, *vacasagrada* - En. sacred cow). Some lexical units, which had already been in Spanish language peninsular variant, changed their meanings under the influence of its English equivalent (*agenda* – Sp. day planner, Cub. agenda, order of the day).

XX century was marked by the Soviet Union's great influence and inclusion of such words as *revolución* (revolution), *brigada* (brigade), *colectivo*(collective) etc. into Cuban variant. In particular, in 1966 the USA adopted "Cuban act" according to which any Cuban footing in the American territory, legally or illegally, got permanent residence. Thus, in Spanish language Cuban variant we can observe following examples: *cranquear* - from English *crank*; *catao* - from En. *cut-out*; *manichear* – from En. *manage*; *plo* – from En. *plug*; *lapelota* – baseball which is a national game in Cuba; *suin* – from En. *swing*, etc.

Relationships between Spanish language Cuban variant and English can be observed also in one unusual language situation outside the territory of Cuba. Cuba's isolationism in the period after Revolution of 1959 caused a quite intensive emigrational outflow of Cuba citizens into the territory of neighbouring countries, in particular the USA. A large community of Cuba descendants in Florida exists in the situation of active bilingualism as "not a result of historical gradual immigration, but large-scale and sudden migration of the Cubans, for whom value of bilingualism remains in the foreground for many (including political) reasons" [9].

Revolution and "Russian trends" in Spanish language Cuban variant

Extratextual factors of Spanish language Cuban variant lexis evolution are especially clearly observed following the Cuban revolution of 1959. New historical and political conditions caused necessity for new nominations and rethinking of some ideas, and that led to lexical units having new meanings (*revolución*, *brigada*, *voluntario*), and to rearrangement of these meanings in the context of their popularity (*pionero*, *reunión*, *colectivo*). In connection with new realities occurring, new lexical units were introduced – *anapista* (member of National Association of Agricultural Workers), *cederista* (member of Committee on Revolution Protection) etc. Most of these units have ideological nature, however they are widely used in different contexts. This period is also marked with lots of new abbreviations connected with expansion of bureaucratic apparatus (*MINTRAB* – *MinisteriodeTrabajo* (Ministry of Labour), *CAME* – *ConsejodeAyudaMutuaEconómica*(Council for Mutual Economic Assistance), *MININT* – *MinisteriodelInterior* (Ministry of Internal Affairs). Most of lexical units were phonetically and grammatically assimilated.

Active relationships between Cuba and USSR, joint programmes of higher education promoted introduction of some borrowings from Russian into Spanish language Cuban variant lexis; they were quite successfully (partially or fully) assimilated by Spanish phonetics and grammar (*sputnik*, *bulldózer*, *nihilista*, *biosfera*) [10]. However, when the Soviet Union broke up and cooperation between two countries subsided afterwards, lexical units stopped to be actively borrowed from Russian language.

Concluding provisions

Special geographical position of Cuba and its development political conditions predetermined specificity and special characteristics of Spanish language Cuban variant lexical profile. Influence of several substrates simultaneously, sequential change of geopolitical partners and, as a consequence, introduction of lots of borrowings into vocabulary, dialectological isolation and uniformness of dialectological variants allow to speak about the utmost importance of extratextual factors for Spanish language Cuban variant vocabulary formation. Culturological uniqueness of this national variant lexical units is first of all connected with the history of the nation for which this variant became a national language. Unique location of the island allowed it to absorb language contacts, connected with political economic conditions in Cuba, to the fullest and became an important extratextual factor of Spanish language Cuban variant lexical system change.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors confirm that the presented data are free of conflict of interests.

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